

Lights, Camera, Oita!

If you are interested in a place or a region, then it's only natural that you might want to read about it in a book or a comic book, or see it on the big screen. Oita Prefecture may not appear in fiction as frequently as Tokyo or Osaka, but it has served as the backdrop or inspiration for many entertaining works of fiction.

Here is a quick guide to some notable instances where Oita has appeared in fictional works.

Films:

● Kara-age USA, 2014

Usa City is famous for its delicious *kara-age* (fried chicken) and so it's only natural that kara-age would play a prominent role in this drama film. Ai Takashi stars as a woman from Usa returning to her home-town after an absence of many years to help her family make fried chicken. The title is a pun –the name Usa is often mis-read as “U.S.A.”, and the film features American characters.

● Tsunai Hiichatta! (“Play at Tug-of-War!”), 2012

Despite boasting many wonderful tourist spots and things to do, Oita City is somewhat overshadowed by the prefecture's more famous tourist destinations, Beppu and Yufuin. In this good-natured comedy, Oita City officials attempt to boost the city's profile through the formation of a women's tug-of-war team! For fans of underdog Japanese sports films such as “Waterboys”, this is a must-see.

● Kao (“Face”), 2000

A dark film about sisters and murder. A woman commits a crime and runs from the law, traveling throughout Japan to evade the police. Although the majority of the film is not set in Oita Prefecture, the famous Himeshima Island *Kitsune Odori* (fox dance), - which is part of the Bon-Odori festival - appears during one of the film's most dramatic scenes. Himeshima is a little-known area of Oita, famous for its delicious prawns, and the Fox Dance each summer is a popular event for tourists. This film offers a chance to see one of Oita's most unique festivals.



Manga:

● Shingeki no Kyojin (“Attack on Titan”) by Hajime Isayama, 2009-Present

Although “Attack on Titan” is set in a fictional world, with inspiration for the setting drawn from multiple sources, the author of the manga, Hajime Isayama, is originally from Hita City and so the manga has a strong link to Oita Prefecture. Isayama has continued to maintain a connection with Oita Prefecture since starting the manga. He cut the ribbon on the opening day of the OPAM “Attack on Titan” exhibition in 2015, and also has drawn an illustration of the lead characters from “Attack on Titan” fighting alongside Mejiron (Oita’s mascot) and Kumamon (Kumamoto’s mascot) in honour of the victims of the Kumamoto Earthquake in 2016. If you are a fan of the manga, why not take the train to Hita City and see if the sweeping mountain vistas remind you of the mountains that are backdrop of many of the human vs. man-eating giants battles of “Attack on Titan”.

TV Programmes:

● Kaze no Haruka (“Haruka of the Wind”), 2005-2006

Japanese *asadora* (serialised morning drama series made by NHK) have been broadcast since the early sixties. There are two *asadora* each year, and episodes are shown daily. *Asadora* take place all over Japan, and in 2005 an *asadora* set in Oita Prefecture was broadcast. In “Kaze no Haruka” a young woman named Haruka is living in Yufuin, but she dreams of moving to Osaka to reunite with her mother and become a travel agent. The programme divides its time between Haruka’s new life in Osaka and her old hometown in Oita where her father and sister remain.



● Gunshi Kanbei (“Kanbei the Tactician”), 2014

Junichi Okada (“The Eternal Zero”) plays Kuroda Kanbei, a famous feudal lord of the Sengoku Period of civil war dating from the late fifteenth century to the late sixteenth century. Those who live in Oita Prefecture will of course know that Kuroda Kanbei built Nakatsu Castle, and those who wish to meet a (much cuter and less scary) mascot version of Kuroda Kanbei need only to hop on the train to Nakatsu City. Viewers of this period drama can learn about the history of Kuroda Kanbei, one of Oita’s most famous samurai and a man who helped shape the history of northern Kyushu.

Books:

● Kyūnen Mae no Inori (“A Prayer of Nine Years Ago”) by Ono Masatsugu, 2014

This work won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize, one of Japan’s biggest literary awards. The book is a collection of short stories, and the titular story depicts a single mother returning to the small hometown village of her childhood in Saiki, Oita Prefecture, now accompanied by her own young son. Masatsugu is a native of Oita Prefecture and has stated that he draws inspiration from his hometown when writing his works.

(Continued on page 3)

EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Cost	Contact #
Apr. 11 th – Jul. 9 th	Collection Exhibition	Oita City Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-554-5800
Apr. 7 th – Jun. 6 th	OPAM 2017 Collection Exhibition I “Blend of Colors”	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-533-4500
Apr. 14 th – May 7 th	CIAO! 2017 ~ Welcome to Ueno Mori ~	Oita City Art Museum	TBC	☎ 097-554-5800
Apr. 15 th – Jun. 11 th	Kahitsukan Collection, Kitaōji Rosanjin – Asking about the Beauty of Japan	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4500
May 13 th – Jul. 2 nd	Oorai Narayoshi THE ILLUSTRATOR – The Illustrator of Star Wars and Godzilla, Who Stands Apart	Oita City Art Museum	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4500
Jun. 9 th – Aug. 1 st	OPAM 2017 Collection Exhibition II “Mizu wo Ikou”	Oita Prefectural Art Museum	¥300	☎ 097-533-4500

Most Museums and Centres are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown



STAGE & MUSIC EVENTS

Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Apr. 12 th	18:30	Legally Blonde the Musical	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
Apr. 15 th	14:00	Final Fantasy Concert	iichiko Grand Theatre	TBC	
Apr. 22 nd	12:00 14:30	Family Musical Thomas the Tank Engine	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	
May 27 th	18:00	DRUM TAO – Drum Rock Gale	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	
May 9 th	19:00	Nathalie Stutzmann (Contralto) Singing Schubert	iichiko Otonoizumi	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004
May 14 th	14:00	24 th Regular Concert by the Oita Wind Philharmonic	iichiko Otonoizumi	¥500	☎ 090-2398-0924
Jun. 24 th	14:00	Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary	☎ 097-533-4004

**Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. “+drink” prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand. N/A indicates information was not known to the TOMBO at the time of going to print..

VENUES

iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City iichiko Otonoizumi=Oasis Tower 1F Oita City

Continued from page 2)

● Shikisai wo Motanai Tazaki Tsukuru to, Kare no Junrei no Toshi (Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage”) by Haruki Murakami, 2013

Haruki Murakami is one of Japan’s most successful authors, but did you know that Oita has appeared in one of his novels? In this novel, the titular character attempts to find out why his childhood friends abruptly broke contact with him many years ago. One of the characters in the novel tells a story about his experiences in a remote hot spring area in Oita Prefecture. Murakami is a very talented author when it comes to conveying a sense of place, and I am sure many of us with connections to Oita Prefecture will be interested in seeing his take on the Hot Spring Capital.

Farewell from the Editor

I am sad to announce that this is my last issue of the TOMBO and that from July onwards the TOMBO will be in the care of a new editor. I would like to thank all readers of the TOMBO for their continued support and encouragement over the last two and a half years. Having never edited a newsletter before, I was a little nervous when I started, but I had great experiences compiling each issue of the TOMBO. I hope all the readers of the TOMBO continue to enjoy reading the newsletter in the capable hands of its new editor.

Best wishes,

Miri (editor, 2014-2017)

Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
~May. 8 th	Rokugo Liner - A limited period sightseeing tour bus service to/from Oita airport to/from Beppu or Yufuin, running every Mon, Sat, Sun from Apr 29 th to May 8 th . 8:00am Beppu Kitahama → 8:15 Beppu Kannawa → 8:45 JR Yufuin Sta. → Usajingu Shrine (stop) → Fukiji Temple (stop) → 12:40 Oita Airport 13:35 → Futagoji temple (stop) → Monjyusenji Temple (stop) → JR Yufuin Sta. 17:45 → Beppu Kannawa 18:15 → Beppu Kitahama 18:30 Single ticket(to/from airport): ¥4,000. Reservations are requested for up to 2 days in advance.	Beppu City, Yufu City, Usa city, Kunisaki City	☎ 097-532-6368
Mar. 31 st ~Apr. 3 rd	The 103rd Beppu Hot Springs Festival - This festival will include a number of events and attractions, including free entrance to approximately 88 designated hot spring locations.	Beppu City Ogi-yama mountain	☎ 0977-24-2828
Apr. 1 st ~ 14 th	Tulip Festa 2017 - The tulips in Ogata-machi (a rural town) are in full bloom in April. Fun events for visitors will be held each Saturday and Sunday for the duration of the festival.	Bungo Ono City Ogata-machi, near the Harajiri falls	☎ 0974-42-2111
Apr. 3 rd	The 69th Taketa Okajyou Sakura Festival – A Daimyo Gyoretsu (feudal lord's procession), a samurai parade and more will be held around the castle from 11:00 AM. Oka Castle Ruins are also a highly recommended Sakura sightseeing spot.	Taketa City Oka castle ruins	☎ 0974-63-2638
Apr. 15 th May 20 th Jun. 17 th	Kimono Appreciation Day - Held on the third Saturday of each month, with special offers and discounts for kimono rental and professional photography.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Apr. 15 th ~16 th	The 17th Cento Miglia KAMITSUE - A gathering of cars and culture. This event promises non-stop fun.	Hita City, Kuju-Aso Area, and more	☎ 045-591-6235
May 3 rd ~ 4 th	Ebine Festival - Exhibitions, game competitions, stage events, fresh agricultural produce for sale and a <i>yakiniku</i> corner!	Kitsuki City Yamaga-Machi	☎ 0977-75-1211
May 3 rd ~ 4 th	Onta-yaki Pottery Karasuu Festival - A great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn more about Oita's traditional arts. Ceramics are on sale and visitors can try their hand at the spinning wheel used for making this classic craft for free.	Hita City Motoe-machi	☎ 0973-22-2036
May.6 th ~ 26 th	The 19th MUSIC FESTIVAL Argerich's Meeting Point in Beppu - A music festival featuring a number of performances by famed pianist Martha Argerich and affiliated musicians.	Beppu City, Oita City, Mito City (Ibaragi) and Atami City (Shizuoka)	☎ 0977-27-2300 ☎ 029-231-8000 ☎ 0557-84-2500
May 5 th ~ 6 th	The 30th Kitsuki Castle Festival - Centred around the castle town's "Edo Village", there will be events such as samurai parade in addition to taiko performances. This year, Ken Matsudaira, a famous samurai actor, takes part in the Samurai parade on May 6 th . If you want to join the parade, mail to info@kit-suki.com by Mar. 31 st	Kitsuki City Kitsuki Castle vicinity	☎ 0978-63-0100
May 14 th	Hita Flower Festival - Visitors can purchase fresh flowers, enjoy a flower fashion show and maybe even win a prize in the lottery contest.	Hita City Rose Hill Amagase	☎ 0973-57-3147
May 13 th	Usa Air Base Peace Walk - A 10km walking tour will be held around the former Usa air base. The tour will include guided explanation of the area. The tour departs from Yanagigaura High School at 9AM.	Usa City Yanagigaura high school	☎ 0978-32-1111
May 13 th	Spring rice field exploration - A fun, educational activity for parents and children to learn about wildlife living in the local rice fields (participation fee ¥500, reservations necessary) 13:30-16:30	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
May 18 th ~24 th	Mankoji Temple Market - This gathering has taken place since 1425. Come to exchange goods (May 20 th), compete in costume and karaoke contests, and more.	Oita City Sakanoichi	☎ 097-537-5764
May 21 st	Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou rice planting - Participants can experience planting rice by hand while learning about the local wildlife (participation fee free, reservations necessary) 13:00-17:00	Kokonoe-Machi Kuju Furusato Shizen Gakkou	☎ 0973-73-0001
May 20 th ~ 21 st	Hita River Opening Festival & Fireworks - Performances and other festivities to take place to celebrate the the start of fishing for ayu fish. Don't miss the grand fireworks!	Hita City Mikuma-River	☎ 0973-23-3111
May 28 th	The 18th Himeshima Karei Festival - There will be a Himeshima karei (flounder) tasting, as well as other attractions including a Kitsune-odori performance. (Flounder tasting participation costs approx. ¥1,500)	Himeshima-mura Ferry port	☎ 0978-87-2211
Jun. 4 th	The 65th Mt. Kuju opening - Events will be held at the mountain summit to commemorate the start of the summer mountain season. Schedule is subject to change.	Taketa City Mt. Kuju	☎ 0974-63-1111
Jun. 11 th	Tashibunoshou rice-planting festival - This is a yearly event where visitors can experience planting rice using traditional methods in the small historical rice-paddy village. Schedule is subject to Change.	Bungo Takada City Ozaki area	☎ 0978-22-3100
Jun. 17 th	Lake Kagurame Iris Viewing Festival - A chance to see some eighty different types of irises, numbering more than 15,000 in total. Many events, such as a tea and kagurame <i>dango</i> (sweet rice dumpling) service will be held. Schedule is subject to change.	Beppu City Lake Kagurame	☎ 0977-25-3601
Jun.23 rd ~25 th	The 20th Yufuin Culture Documentary Film Festival - Historical and cultural documentaries will be screened each day in the Yufuin Kouminkan.	Yufu City Yufuin Kouminkan	☎ 0977-85-4464
Jun. 26 th	Ro-ten-buro No Hi (Free "Open-air bath" Entrance) - Four different facilities open their doors for bathers for FREE on this day every year.	Nakatsu City Yabakei-Machi	☎ 0979-22-1111
Jun. 24 th ~25 th	The 24th Lavender Festival - 6,600 purple lavender trees at Oita's Kenmin no Mori Forest Park are a sight to see! Come pick your own lavender for FREE (up to 100 branches)!	Oita City Oita's Kenmin no Mori Forest Park	☎ 097-588-0656

What's Going On?

From the Plaza

Free Legal Consultations for International Residents

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations for foreign residents on the *third Wednesday of every month*.

- When: **January 18th, February 15th, March 15th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Sei Ito (Administrative Solicitor)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Chinese

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Chinese *every Thursday*.

- When: **Every Thursday (except January 5th)**.
- Time: **10:00-13:00**
- Consultant: **Wenyu Kodama**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations in Tagalog

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations in Tagalog.

- When: **January 7th, February 4th, March 4th**.
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Consultant: **Rhodora Yoshitake (President of the Oita Philippines Friendship Association)**
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Free Consultations Regarding Immigration, Residency, and Citizenship

The Oita International Plaza is holding free consultations regarding immigration, residency, and citizenship on *the first Sunday of each month*.

- When: **February 5th, March 5th**
- Time: **13:00-16:00**
- Languages available: **Japanese and English**
- Interpretation into **languages other than Japanese and English** may be available with a reservation (there are no guarantees). The reservation must be made 2 days prior to the consultation day.
- Venue: **Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)**

Japanese Lessons

Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.

Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-11:30

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-15:30

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-11:30

For more information contact Ms. Fukata TEL: 097-527-2614

E-MAIL: nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp

Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Monday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact Mr. Kii in the Beppu International Affairs Division

TEL: 0977-21-6133 E-MAIL: int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp

Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are free of charge. For more information call Ms. Ohashi CELL: 090-7866-2486

AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:30. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Beppu Foreign Tourist Information Office on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-12:00. For more information contact:

Ms. Miyase CELL: 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)

Ms. Kato TEL: 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

Community Classes and Events

Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day.

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE. For more details and information on when Happy Talk is held, please visit the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HappyTalkOita>

Changes to International Plaza Opening Hours

From April, the Plaza's opening times will change.
The Plaza will now be open from **9:30 to 18:00**, Monday to Saturday (closed on Sundays).



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THANK YOU !!

A special thanks to all those who co-operated with us for this issue. Your help was very much appreciated.

THE TOMBO is produced by:

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<http://www.oitaplaza.jp/english/>

HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm

(closed weekends and the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. We are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)

Closed national holidays & Dec 29th - Jan 3rd

The International Plaza is located on the basement floor of OASIS Hiroba 21 (iichiko Culture Center).

